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REMARKS

ON AN ANONIMOUS

PAMPHLET,

INTITLED,

SOME ACCOUNT OF A MEETING HELD AT THE GUILD-HALL AT BURY,

On the 4th. of NOVEMBER, 1771.

IPSWICH:

Printed and Sold by R. HAWES and C. PUNCHARD, Bookſellers, and Stationers: Sold alſo by Mr. SHAVE of the ſame Place; by E. ROGRS of Bury; and all other Bookſellers in Suffolk.

(c. 1772)

Advertiſement to the Reader.

THE pamphlet in queſtion having lately fallen into my hands, I had the curioſity to give it a peruſal; after which I could not avoid making the following remarks, not ſo much on the ſubject of the pamphlet, as on the author, and his manner of arguing. I know him not, nor do I deſire to know him; ſo that whatever I ſay of him is grounded intirely on the merits of his pamphlet. I ſhall not imitate him by pointing at any particular, nor indeed, as far as I am-able, in any one thing, except that of concealing my name. It would not be prudent to ſtand in battle array againſt a perſon who has wiſely adopted the buſh-fight.

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REMARKS, &c.

THAT a houſe of induſtry would be a relief to the juſtices is not doubted. They have at preſent a good deal of trouble.

That the ſaid houſe might in time turn to the advantage of the land-owners by leſſening the rates will not, though it might, be diſputed.

Had the pamphlet writer ſtudied himſelf a little more, he might poſſibly, I ſay poſſibly, it being a very difficult thing to get to the thorough knowledge of one's ſelf, he might poſſibly have diſcovered the feelings, he boaſts of, to be greatly influenced by the foregoing conſiderations. For, however prudently he endeavours to conceal himſelf as to his name, he gives us p. 11. to gueſs at his office of juſtice; and very probably is a landowner. But, let this writer's pretenſions to logic be what they will, I make bold to tell him that neither of theſe two things enter into the ſtate of the queſtion, are abſolutely to be excluded from it. The charitable relief of the poor, and the good of the community in general, are the only objects to be conſidered. Now will a houſe of induſtry anſwer theſe two ends?

The writer tells us the poor will be maintained there better and at a leſs expence: the laſt words are offenſive to a truly

feeling heart, and which I've already refuſed admitting. The former in true logic are very little to the purpoſe, as the queſtion is not about relief meerly, but a charitable relief. Now does all relief conſiſt in diet, clothes, lodging? if ſo his argument may be concluſive. But muſt not relief looſe its name, and degenerate into tyranny, when ſeparated from charity? And what man would thank you for relief, if you made him purchaſe it at the expence of what is infinitely more dear to him? Is not this however the caſe of a houſe of induſtry? It deprives the poor man of his liberty, of his ſovereignty in his little cot, and of all the inexpreſſible comforts of a family life, which, at his return from his labour, amply recompence him for all the toils of the day. It is to be preſumed the writer, though he may know the value of liberty, is a ſtranger to the tender connexions of a parent with his children, and therefore incapable of feeling them.

He tells us the induſtrious poor, who live in theſe houſes, acknowledge their happineſs, &c. We have this writer's word for it. But why then have they not communicated their ſentiments to their fellow poor, who are certainly moſt intereſted in knowing them. On the contrary we find our poor bleſs God they live not in the hundreds, where theſe houſes are erected. I need not draw the concluſion: it is evident. The writer brings his proof from houſes at a diſtance. He does well. He is not ſo liable to have it conteſted. But he makes no great compliment to that of a principal town in theſe hundreds under the very eye of ſo many prudent managers. This indeed would not have ſuited his purpoſe. The poor would have contradicted him; ſo jealous are they of their liberty, and ſo ſenſible of their *finer feelings*.

However, I muſt do our writer the juſtice to ſay, that he is

almoſt aſhamed to withſtand the force of this argument, that he rather allows an houſe of induſtry is a cruelty upon the induſtrious poor, but that it is a neceſſary evil, conſidering the great majority there is in every pariſh, of lazy, indolent and profligate poor. The pariſhes are much obliged to him for the compliment he makes them; and I hope, and believe, might eaſily diſpute him the truth of what he advances, by an average of two thirds. But what does he conclude from hence? He declares it, notwithſtanding all his *finer feelings*, that the good, being few, muſt ſuffer with the reprobate. How unlike to his maker? who would even have ſpared Sodom and Gomorrha, had there been found therein but ten juſt, and who, when he determined to deſtroy them, ſaved from thence the innocent family. He'll perhaps quibble with me about the the word ſuffer, and pretend he has made no ſuch declaration. He does not uſe the word, let me grant it, but he evidently implys the thing. And ſhall his logic terminate in a diſpute of words? But why dwell upon anſwering arguments, which he, who advances them, ſeems to have no great opinion of. He allows a houſe of induſtry a reſtraint upon the natural rights and liberties of the poor. That's enough. It cannot therefore be called a charitable relief: he is ſenſible of it; and for his laſt reſource, and where alone he uſes ſome appearance of argument, heſays the public good requires it.

To enforce this his argument, he, by a rhetorical figure of amplification, gives us the moſt hideous picture of the poor in general; he repreſents them as a ſet of lazy, thieving, ſwearing, drunken, debauched people: he then proceeds to ſhew us how a houſe of induſtry would remedy all this, by confining them, employing them, keeping them to religious duties, and procuring inſtruction for the children: and from hence he concludes, the public good requires an houſe of induſtry. Had he ſaid an

houſe of correction, we would willingly have ſubſcribed: and indeed his whole pamphlet proves juſt ſo much and nothing more. But we are ſorry this writer expatiates ſo largely on the profligateneſs of the poor, without even hinting at the ſource of it; his *feelings*, perhaps, were too *fine* and delicate for this. To attack vice in high ſtations did not anſwer his purpoſe; it might even have been of prejudice to his favourite ſyſtem. And yet, who is not ſenſible, the corruption of the poor is owing to that of the rich? ſo that *regiſad exemplum, &c.* meaning perſons in higher ſtations, has time out of mind paſſed into a proverb. How indeed can we expect to find in the poor a ſenſe of, or reſpect for religion and religious duties, when they ſee many of the rich abſolutely neglect and contemn them. Is it reaſonable to imagine the lower claſs of people will be ſober and regular, when they behold perſons of rank, education, and even in poſts of truſt, giving looſe to all their paſſions, ſeducing the innocent, bidding open defiance to ſpiritual courts, and, what would ſurpaſs belief, were it not a fact of public notoriety, propoſing, encouraging, yes, expoſing to open day-light and public view, ſcenes, I bluſh to think, and modeſty forbids to ſpeak of. Here lies the root of the evil, which this ſuperficial writer either does not or will not ſee. Let only the gentlemen live at their reſpective ſeats, employ the poor of their pariſhes, inſtead of ſquandering their money in public places and diverſions, frequent regularly the divine ſervice, and lead exemplary lives, I may venture to ſay, you'll ſee an almoſt general reformation of manners, without the aſſiſtance of a houſe of induſtry.

But after all, will an houſe of induſtry be of the aſſiſtance or public good, this writer rather ſuppoſes than proves? It will confine the poor, firſt reaſon: we are too ſenſible of it; but what poor? chiefly thoſe who deſerve their liberty the moſt,

the honeſt and induſtrious poor; for as to the others, who value their liberty the more the worſe uſe they make of it, it is almoſt beyond diſpute they'll never reſign to be confined, 'till they are ripe for the gallows; they'll fly from their pariſhes, abandon their families, rove about the country, pilfer, and commit all ſorts of diſorders: it is even much to be feared that ſome of the induſtrious, who might maintain their families with a ſmall relief, an allowance of firing, will by this means be induced to become wood-ſtealers, if not worſe. The confinement of the worthleſs poor would be a public good, we allow it; not that we think it would correct them, confinement ſeldom does that, but would at leaſt rid the public of them, and perhaps make them in ſome meaſure uſeful. But to confine the ſober, the honeſt, the induſtrious poor, merely becauſe they are poor, with theſe miſcreants! what feeling heart can bear to think of it, or what reflecting man can ever adviſe it? one ſcabby ſheep often infects a whole flock. If it is found by experience, and the public papers have mentioned it, that the felons in priſons, by their evil communication corrupt the debtors; is not the ſame in proportion to be feared in thoſe houſes? have not, I don't ſay the fruit, but the * fruits, of unlawful liberties been an undeniable proof of it? and ſhall the innocent be expoſed to theſe dangers? confine then the reprobate as much as you pleaſe, but ſet at liberty the honeſt and induſtrious poor: the good of the community demands it, and their pariſhes are willing to relieve them.

Where will hands at laſt be found for winter work? how will children be incited to hardſhip and labour after being pent up from their infancy in a coop? and what farmer chuſes to take them from theſe houſes. One labourer can maintain his

* Bury workhouſe.

ſamily, but wants a ſmall allowance of wood: another falls ſick for a week or two, and is thereby reduced: a little relief from the pariſhes would preſerve them theſe uſeful hands: but no, their all muſt be ſeized, they muſt be hurried to the work-houſe: what a detriment to the farmer! can we imagine him unwilling to relieve the poor in theſe caſes? and has he not a right to object to a houſe of induſtry?

But he objects merely becauſe he is jealous of his authority. Abſurd! muſt I anſwer with our writer, for he muſt take his abſurdity to himſelf. Will he refuſe the farmers every pretenſion to the *finer feelings?* they are much obliged to him: for my part it ſeems to me to ſtand with reaſon, that the induſtrious poor are likely to be treated much more humanely by thoſe who have had connexions with them, employed them, and been witneſſes of their induſtry, than by an alien. But after all, what is this authority of an overſeer, and where the reaſon to be ſo jealous of it? a mere temporary thing! a phantom of authority rather than a reality! ſeeing it is ſubordinate to the direction of the juſtices. It is not armed with the awful parade of a whipping poſt at the caprice of a favourite hireling. It does not expoſe children to have their limbs fractured. It is in the hands of fellow pariſhioners, compaſſionate to their induſtrious labourers. But why then thoſe complaints the poor make at every meeting againſt the officers, accuſing them of partiality, &c.? Weigh well what I ſaid, you have your anſwer. But, leaſt your logic ſhould lead you to miſtake evidence itſelf, I give you the reaſon, and ground it on your own words and againſt yourſelf. They are partial, I allow it you, and juſtly ſo; becauſe they know beſt who are the induſtrious, and who the indolent poor. Theſe they give to ſparingly to force them to work; thoſe they relieve comfortably to recompence their in-

duſtry. Whereas in the houſe propoſed all muſt be on a level, and perhaps the worſt beſt off, provided by their arts they can court the hireling, who has no check upon him, but probably gained the ear of his conſtituents. Hard caſe! give me leave to make uſe of the figure of exclamation a little more appoſite, I think, than our pamphlet writer.

Second reaſon. A houſe of induſtry will employ the poor, and thereby make them uſeful to the public. In what will it employ them? in ſpinning, ſowing, knitting, netting and other ſuch trifles. But will our pamphlet writer's logic give him the aſſurance to tell us theſe are uſeful employments for the induſtrious poor? I pity his *ipſe dixit* ſcholars. What novice in logic does not know the common opinion is, that the leſs good is an evil in compariſon of the greater good? and ſhall ſpinning, &c. compare, in regard to public utility, with works of huſbandry, &c.

Third reaſon. It will keep the poor to their religious duties. So then; he allows of ſhew of religion, of religion by conſtraint! let him beware of popiſh doctrines: but after all, the induſtrious poor want not to be kept to their religious duties; they are the flower of the paſtor's flock; deprive him of them, I was going to ſay that in moſt pariſhes, but it would be carrying the hyperbole to far, he would have nothing but the walls of the church to pray with and preach to: wonder not then at the zeal of the paſtors for retaining their induſtrious poor. It is a moral and witneſſed proof of what I advance.

Fourth and laſt reaſon. It will procure inſtruction and education for the children. This, I own, is an important point, upon which the progreſs of religion, and good of ſociety greatly depend. It might therefore at firſt ſight make the moſt zealous patrons of the poor ready to ſacrifice what is deareſt to

the parents, for the ſake of their poſterity; but upon due conſideration it will appear of as little weight as the reſt: for let me aſk theſe obvious queſtions, the reſolution of which will clear up the matter. Whoſe children are to be inſtructed, by whom, in what, to what age? the children are the children of the poor, but of the poor whom misfortunes force into theſe houſes, moſtly therefore of the induſtrious poor, as we have proved above, by a probable argument, not to run our logic too high, now theſe want it the leaſt; their good parents would have taken care to have carried them to the pariſh for inſtructions:--but here they'll be inſtructed by a perſon particularly appointed. Do you mean a clergyman, or the governor? if the latter, we may reaſonably doubt whether he wants not inſtruction himſelf. If the former, we may ſay without offence, that it cannot be preſumed he'll have more at heart the inſtruction of this confuſed multitude, this moſaick work, than the particular and natural paſtors of each, who to their honour have lately ſhewn, they look upon themſelves as the parents of their poor:--they'll not only be inſtructed in religion, but in reading and writing, and by their learning be ſecured from the arts of Romiſh emiſſaries. Weak reaſoner! they'll be the more expoſed to them; becauſe in this caſe they may be attacked in two manners; not only by artful diſcourſes, which often come in at one ear and paſs through the other, but more dangerouſly and with leſs pains by inſinuating books, which may continually lie before them. Beſides, let the public ſay, whether the knowledge of reading and writing makes the lower claſs better; ſome farmers even have reaſon to wiſh their children had never known either. Let me, however, allow our logician all the inſtruction and education he boaſts of: pray to what age is it to laſt? I ſee in the papers advertiſements for putting out children

of eight or ten years old; and indeed they muſt not be much older if they are intended to be rendered uſeful members of ſociety. Now what great ſtore of learning can they have? how well grounded can they be in their religion at that age? they may juſt know how to ſtammer words out of a book, and ſcrawl a few letters, which I doubt much whether it will improve the girls fingers for the needle, or the boys for the plough.

I have now, I think, waded through the moſt important parts of our learned writer's pamphlet. I've gathered all the ſcattered and faint rays of reaſoning into one focus, to give them greater force, or, in other words, I've placed them all under the eye at once; but they warm me not, they make not the leaſt impreſſion upon me. The diſtreſs of ſome poor, the diſorders of others we know; we do not want him to declaim them to us: the former might plead for an hoſpital, the latter for a ſchool, an houſe of correction, but neither for a houſe of induſtry, in the ſenſe it is underſtood. Againſt this there are many other weighty objections, as the firſt enormous charges, the miſmanagement it is likely to fall into in proceſs of time from party intereſt, ſo that at laſt it may come to be farmed out, &c. but I leave theſe to abler heads and pens; I only propoſed ſome remarks upon our writer. Surely he'll not tell me, by my mentioning the miſmanagement it is likely to fall into, that I allow the utility of it at preſent. He does as much to a gentleman he points at in his pamphlet; and becauſe the gentleman denied the conſequence, he reproaches him with want of logic: but in this, principally, he ſhews his abſolute ignorance of the ſcience. Who does not know that in mathematics there are poſtulata, in philoſophy there are ſuppoſitions, yes impoſſibilities we argue from without allowing any of them. Our writer ſeems even ſenſible of the weight of this gentleman's argument; or elſe why

does he ſay (faintly indeed) that future evils which may happen through the common defect of human things, ought not to deter from a preſent good: and we allow it him, provided thoſe evils follow not *ex natura rei*, and are not unavoidable conſequences. But ſuppoſing all the good he pleaſes of the preſent houſes (let him take notice, we only ſuppoſe, we don't allow) will not in time, I mean very ſoon, a favourite militia ſerjeant be put in for governor, who can boaſt of making an hundred a year of his place? will not the clergyman be the ſon of ſome petty freeholder, the workmen, tradeſmen, corporation men? and are not the poor and public likely to fare well in ſuch hands? every thing in our days is made a job of. And ſhall ſuch an important affair as the relief of the poor be expoſed to ſo threatening a danger? at preſent every farmer, yes every pariſhioner, has a right to aſſiſt at the veſtries, and ſee how the rates are applied; will it be ſo then? But the farmer, ſays our writer, pays nothing to the poor rates, it is in reality the landowner; and he ſneers much at a very ſenſible gentleman, for advancing the farmer does pay. We are perſuaded this writer thinks it is only the landowner pays, and that this conſideration makes one of *his fineſt feelings*. The farmer cannot be ſaid to pay taxes, becauſe he deducts them to his landlord. But as he takes the poor rates at his own riſk, I think he may be ſaid in ſome meaſure to pay to them, eſpecially if he has a long leaſe: but I leave this point to better calculators than our writer or myſelf to determine. He tells us a bill for houſes of induſtry paſſed the houſe of commons; but he does not mention by what majority, nor how many members were preſent, two very material points. Perhaps it ſuited not his purpoſe. Thoſe Thoſe at leaſt, who paſſed it, could not plume themſelves with being popular gentlemen. He owns it was rejected by the houſe

of lords; and I ſhall not make them ſo groſs a compliment to ſay, what muſt follow from his words, that they did it without examination, or through ignorance: no I'm perſuaded they knew very well what they were about, and did it through the diſintereſted, compaſſionate, and ſublime ſentiments ſuitable to their high rank and dignity; and if any lords have ſince given their conſent to the erecting of particular houſes, it muſt not be imputed to a change of ſentiment, it can only be attributed to their condeſcendance to the majority of the gentlemen. But let us not wonder at theſe deducible compliments, which his pamphlet is full of; let us rather be aſtoniſhed to ſee how, when he tries to dreſs up a compliment with all the art he is maſter of, he ſpoils it before he has done with it: the noble pair he mentions, ſtood not in need of ſuch a panegyriſt; the public voice proclaims their praiſes much louder and much better: but I ſincerely congratulate the lady, that her name and country ſpeak her of the ancient inhabitants of our iſle, that her family is known, or elſe this writer had led us almoſt inevitably into a miſtake, which would have turned to the diſcredit of her parentage.

Compliment is certainly not this writer's talent, abuſe and ſcurrility we muſt allow him: the gentleman whom he attacks will excuſe me, if I let him not paſs unnoticed in this point, where he ſhews the foulneſs of his heart, as much as he has before convinced us of the weakneſs of his underſtanding. I know they think he is to be neglected and contemned; and that he is ſo by them; I own it; they judge like gentlemen, and do what every other gentleman muſt do for them: neither do I preſume to undertake their defence, it would be doing them an injury, they ſtand not in need of defence; their characters are too well eſtabliſhed, and placed above the reach of ſuch low mortals.

But ought however the man, who throws his dirt in the dark at ſuch characters, to be intirely ſpared?

He begins by ſome gentlemen of the Roman catholic communion; he knows only two were preſent at the meeting, that one was a mere ſpectator, having nothing in the hundreds, that the other had as great a right to be there as moſt, his property being as large. And this perhaps is what raiſed his gall; he owns, he thinks they ſaid not much; the one had no right to ſpeak, the other he might have obſerved ready to take notes, to enable him to ſpeak prudently, all this our writer paſſes over in ſilence, becauſe the acknowledgement of this would have put a ſtop to his low wit; to give it a free ſcope he makes this gentleman vote againſt him, and makes him do it through ſuch vile motives, if we may gueſs at them, for underſtand them we cannot, that he hopes thereby to frighten every patron of the poor with the dread of popery; but he muſt not take them for flies to be caught in ſuch cobweb-nets: he might, inſtead of his unintelligible jargon, have brought us ſome better reaſons, reaſons indeed, for preſuming to interpret theſe gentlemen's ſentiments; he might have told us they feared for the education of the children of their poor, and for the poor themſelves, who would thereby be liable to be deprived the uſe and laſt comforts of their profeſſion; but he foreſaw the firſt would alarm all thoſe who diſſent from us as it did in Kent; and that the latter would be offenſive, to the charity our church profeſſes towards perſons of every denomination, he therefore through a mean prudence conceals them.

He treats very little better a gentleman whom nevertheleſs he owns venerable by age and experience, he might have added by ſound judgment and probity of manners, whereas we may venture to pronounce our writer young and raw, who gives us

but a bad ſpecimen both of his judgment and manners. He tells us, with a perhaps indeed, *that this gentleman had rather direct the diſtribution of the pariſh money himſelf (of which the chief part comes out of his own pocket)* than it ſhould *go into an other channel.* What does he mean by this? would he inſinuate any ſiniſter or partial applications? we have reaſon to ſuſpect it conſidering this writer's turn, who need not intimate to us, that he has a regard for very few who oppoſe him; we can eaſily perceive it; and I dare ſay it gives not the leaſt concern to any of them. He blames the warmth of this, and another gentleman of an unexceptionable character with an unintelligible ſneer, for putting the queſtion. If I judge right, the meeting was nothing but confuſion from the beginning, or ſtating the caſe to the very end. Some few arguments were advanced on both ſides. But the favourers of the queſtion fearing it would be carried in the negative, had a mind for a time to exclude the farmers, who were invited by the advertiſement; being told that could not be done with propriety, and perceiving a great majority againſt them, they then propoſed to adjourn; this was refuſed with warmth, as ſeeming contrary to the intent of the meeting, and only to anſwer their own ends; the queſtion was required to be put, upon refuſal one of theſe gentlemen hinted at, and formerly a ſenator, put it; and it was carried in the negative by a very great majority. This, I think, is a plain narrative of what paſſed; ſo that the meeting was not adjourned, as our writer peremptorily affirms, whoſe word is not always to be taken; I leave him to pleaſe himſelf in his noted quagmire and his favourite abſurd! the Herculean club, the Achilles to every thing that oppoſes him. I've juſt remarked above, that there is more reaſon for what the gentleman venerable for age and experience advanced, than we young ones are at firſt aware of. However I

may differ in opinion, I ſhall always deem it an imprudence to call what a Neſtor ſays an abſurdity. An attorney likewiſe by oppoſing him excites his indignation, and to revenge himſelf he abuſes him, but he may be proud of being abuſed by ſuch a pen and in ſuch company; our writer will have him act through intereſt; and what wonder, when with his uſual low arts he has a mind to make us judge the ſame of the clergy, by telling us they pay not the leaſt to the poor rates; from whence it appears, he would have us conclude that the only reaſon why they are againſt a houſe of induſtry, is becauſe they would receive no advantage from the rates being reduced; but this at leaſt we muſt conclude that he judges every one acts through intereſt: now why does he judge ſo? I ſhall not give him the reaſon, the apoſtle will do it for me, *Thou art inexcuſable O man!* ſays he, *whoſoever thou art, that judgeſt; for wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thyſelf; for thou that judgeſt, does the ſame things.* Which words authorize us to ſay, as we have intimated above, that intereſt is this writer's *fineſt feeling:* but I would adviſe him even for his intereſt not to be too warm in regard to a houſe of induſtry, whether he has ready money to lend upon it, or hopes thereby in time to be relieved in the rates, ſome rumours lately come to my ears about the houſe at Nacton, is the cauſe of my giving him this charitable piece of advice.

He concludes his pamphlet by owning, and how could he deny a public fact! that the clergy were almoſt unanimous againſt a houſe of induſtry; I think there were only two for it; but far be it from me to imitate our writer, to cenſure them or any other gentlemen for differing in opinion, their characters are reſpectable, and I doubt not but what both they and the reſt of the gentlemen had their reaſons much ſuperior to thoſe this

writer has offered to the public, when we are acquainted with them, they may make a due impreſſion upon us; in the mean time they muſt give us leave to ſay, that the clergy acted like clergy, worthy of their education and profeſſion, and that their unanimous voice, in ſuch an affair as this, cannot but be of the greateſt weight, if not deciſive. Men of prudence and learning, reſiding in their pariſhes, they muſt know the neceſſities, both corporal and ſpiritual of their poor, they cannot but be as proper judges as any of the beſt manner of relieving them, and they ſufficiently ſhewed their compaſſionate ſentiments towards them: but no, our dictatorial writer ſwelling with preſumption and conceit (perhaps at his preſent performance) tells them, they are all in the wrong, that their charity is miſtaken, and finiſhes with a very indecent ſneer at them; ſo that I cannot help finiſhing with him in the words of the Roman orator, *qui ſemel vere eundie fines tranſient, eumbene & naviter oportet eſſe impudentem.*

F I N I S.